

Candidate Conservation Agreements

What are CCAs?

Agreements between one or more parties that address the conservation needs of candidate or at-risk species. Both Federal and non-Federal landowners can be CCA partners. CCAs do not provide the landowner with regulatory assurances.

What is the landowner's role?

Voluntarily agrees to implement described actions for a specified period of time to remove or reduce the threats to the species. Works with the Service to design conservation measures.

What are the benefits?

For the landowner: Provides guidance and a formal management plan that identifies specific conservation actions for covered species and habitats.

For the species: Helps to remove threats and improve status so listing may not be necessary.

Who can participate?

Any landowner, Federal or non-Federal.

Courtesy of Don Saenz U.S. Forest Service, Southern Research Station



Conserving the Elusive Louisiana Pine Snake: Partners Take Action

"It's a big step forward. Everyone is looking at management actions that could benefit the Louisiana pine snake," said Debbie Fuller, Fish and Wildlife Service biologist in Lafayette, Louisiana, of the Candidate Conservation Agreement for the species. This agreement involves eight partners—Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Fort Polk Military Installation, Texas National Forests, Kisatchie National Forest, U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station, and the Southeast and Southwest

Regions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Adopted in December 2003, the CCA guides the partners to avoid and minimize impacts to the snake, exchange information on successful management practices, and coordinate research efforts.

The Louisiana pine snake, a candidate for Federal listing, historically occurred in the longleaf pine ecosystem of northwest Louisiana and east central

Texas. Always limited in range, the snake has been reduced to six small and isolated pineland fragments—three in Texas and three in Louisiana. "Habitat is changing from land uses," said Dr. Craig Rudolph, a research ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service's Southern Research Station in east Texas. "Short rotation silviculture and fire suppression are two major issues, and road mortality is also a factor."

Louisiana pine snakes prey primarily on pocket gophers, which feed on bluestem grasses and leafy plants in pine stands. Frequent fire maintains the grassy groundcover essential for the pocket gopher and the pine snake.

"We're cooperatively involved with Dr. Rudolph in surveys for the Louisiana pine snake. There are so few to be found. We are using the Service's section 6 grant funds in a support role."

—Ricky Maxey, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department



Courtesy of Joan Walker, USFWS